

Frequently Asked Questions

General

How long is a visa good for?

You may use your visa to travel to the United States until the expiry date shown on the visa foil.

My passport containing a valid visa has expired. I've obtained a new passport; do I need a new visa?

If the passport in which your visa has been placed has expired, the visa in the old passport still can be used, provided that you also carry a valid passport of the same nationality.

Important Note: If, when canceling your old passport, the passport authority has clipped the corners of the passport, and, in so doing, has damaged the U.S. visa in any way, that visa is no longer valid and cannot be used for travel to the United States.

I have a visa in my old passport. Can I just transfer it over?

It is not possible to transfer a visa from one passport to another. A new application must be submitted and approved.

My passport will expire soon; do I need to get a new passport?

Yes, you must either renew your passport or be issued a new one because the U.S. visa regulations state that all non-immigrant applicant passports must be valid for at least six months beyond the anticipated date of travel.

What if the visa does not cover my entire stay in the United States?

The visa expiration date is the **last** date on which you may **enter** the United States. . Most countries' visas use the expiration date as the date by which a visitor must depart the country. The period of validity of a visa relates only to the time in which you may travel to the United States and apply for admission. Visa expiration date does not determine how long you may remain in the country; length of stay is determined by the admitting Immigration Officer at the U.S. port of entry.

Does a visa guarantee that I can enter the United States?

A valid visa permits you to apply for admission to the United States when you arrive at the airport (or other port of entry) in the United States. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the port of entry make the final decision as to whether you may be admitted to the United States, and how long you may stay in the United States.

How long can I stay in the United States?

The period of validity of a visa relates only to the length of time during which the holder may travel to the United States and apply for admission at a port of entry. It does not determine the length of stay which is a matter decided by U.S. immigration authorities at the port of entry. If, while you are in the United States, you find that you need to stay there longer than the period of time initially granted to you, you must contact the nearest office of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) to apply for an extension of your stay.

If I just have a tourist visa, what sort of activities can I do in the States?

The tourist visa is only valid for travel to the United States for a temporary visit for pleasure. To apply for such a visa, please follow the instructions listed under **visa categories**. You are not permitted to work or study if you have been admitted to the United States on a tourist visa.

What shall I do when my application is pending?

When a non-immigrant visa application is conditionally approved and the application requires additional administrative processing, we are unable to estimate how long we will need to complete the processing. The administrative requirements are complex and time consuming and this processing is handled by our headquarters at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. It is difficult to respond to questions concerning the status of your case while the additional processing is pending. As soon as the processing is finished, the consular section staff will contact you. Please do not make any final departure plans to the U.S. until you have your visa in hand.

If you want to inquire about pending non-immigrant application status, you may call the Consular Section (Non-immigrant visa unit) at 885-5500 between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. on normal embassy working days or send an e-mail inquiry to dhakaNIV@state.gov.

Fees

How do I pay the application fee?

The application processing fee of \$131 can be paid at Saimon Overseas Limited or Standard Chartered Bank in Gulshan. The application fee is non-refundable; no refund will be made if the applicant decides not to pursue an interview or if the applicant is found not eligible for a visa. The **original fee receipt** must be presented at the time of personal interview in the Consular Section.

I paid the application fee but decided not to apply, can I get my money back?

Once you have paid the visa application fee at Saimon Overseas Limited or Standard Chartered Bank, the fee cannot be refunded.

My application was refused. Why can't I get my money back?

The fee that you paid is an application fee. Everyone who applies for a U.S. visa, anywhere in the world, must pay this fee, which covers the cost of adjudicating your application. As the application form states, the application fee is non-refundable whether or not you are issued a visa. If you choose to reapply for a visa, whether at this Embassy or elsewhere, you must pay the application fee again.

Before I applied for the visa, I paid \$131 visa fee into the bank. Why is the consular officer telling me I have to pay a new fee and sending me to the cashier window?

All visa applicants are required to pay an application fee, which is charged to cover the costs involved in the processing of a visa application. However, **nationals of certain countries** are required to pay a reciprocity fee in order for the visa to be issued. These fees reflect the fees charged by the applicant's government for a similar service to a U.S. citizen. Currently, **there is no reciprocity fee for Bangladeshi passport holders.**

How do I pay the reciprocity fee?

The reciprocity fee must be paid in cash (U.S. dollars or taka) at the Consular Section at the time of the interview. Please note that **any reciprocity fee may not be paid in advance to Saimon Overseas Ltd. or to Standard Chartered Bank.**

Why is the reciprocity fee more/less than my friend's fee?

Reciprocity fees are based on nationality and reflect the fees charged by your government for a similar service to an American citizen. Different governments charge different fees and this is reflected in the reciprocity fee which we are asking you to pay.

Why was the non-immigrant visa application fee increased?

As of January 1, 2008 the application fee for a U.S. non-immigrant visa increased from \$100 to \$131. This increase allows the U.S. Department of State to recover the costs of security and other enhancements to the non-immigrant visa application process.

How long the nonimmigrant visa fee is valid?

The \$131 nonimmigrant visa processing fee is valid for 90 days only.

If I fail to appear for the scheduled appointment, what should I do?

Please return to the Consular Section within the validity of the \$131 visa fee payment (90 days only). The Non-immigrant Visa Unit re-schedules appointments on Mondays between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. on normal Embassy workdays.

What is a SEVIS Fee and how do I pay it?

Student visa and exchange visitor visa applicants with a Form I-20 and DS-2019 are required to pay an additional SEVIS Fee to the Department of Homeland Security

(DHS). This is an additional fee for the student and exchange visitor visa applications. This fee must be paid prior to the applicant's appointment at the Consular Section. Proof of payment of the SEVIS fee is required at the time of appointment. No interview will be conducted without the proof of SEVIS payment.

Student visas

Can I enter the United States on my student visa or exchange visitor visa before the school/exchange program begins?

United States Department of Homeland Security regulations state that holders of F, M and J nonimmigrant visas will not be admitted to the United States until a date 30 days or less prior to the beginning of your program date, as given on your form I-20 (for student visas) or DS-2019 (for exchange visitor visas).

How do I know if I am a bona fide student or not?

The interviewing Consular Officer determines this based on the information presented in your application and the facts you present during your student visa interview.

How can I make the Visa Officer believe that I am financially solvent?

You must present evidence that shows sufficient resources to completely fund your first year of study and a continuing source of funds for the following years.

Ties to your home country - what does it mean?

This means that you must show that you have compelling reasons to return to Bangladesh.

Can I go to the American Center in Dhaka to get information about higher education in the U.S.? What is their address?

The American Center, a unit of the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy, Dhaka provides the services outlined below for students seeking information about educational opportunities in the United States. We recommend you utilize the American Center and its services before completing any of the steps above. If you are considering studying in the U.S., the American Center should be your first stop.

The American Center services include, but **are not limited** to:

- Individual advising sessions with the Educational Advisor.
- Pre-departure orientation programs to prepare students for their stay at American colleges and universities.
- Individual pre-departure orientation.
- Test information (http://dhaka.usembassy.gov/advising_test_info.html) and application bulletins for the TOEFL®, SAT®, GRE®, GMAT® and USMLE exams, and information on how to register and pay for the tests.
- Catalogs and CDs from colleges and universities in the United States.

- Academic reference materials and directories for undergraduate and graduate study; subject guides; test preparatory guides; video tapes, and other educational training programs.
- Video programs on U.S. higher education and college campuses, every Sunday and Monday at 3:00 PM.

Visit the international student guide to US education site at <http://educationusa.state.gov/>

The American Center
Road # 27, House # 110, Banani, Dhaka.
Telephone : 8837150-4

Can I take a holiday in U.S. after I have completed my student/exchange program?

If you have a student visa you may remain in the United States for up to 60 days after the end of your studies. Holders of exchange visitor visas may remain for up to 30 days. If you wish to remain longer, you will be required to apply for an adjustment of status from student/exchange visitor to a tourist with the Department of Homeland Security office having jurisdiction over your place of residence.

I have not yet received my I-20 form, but my classes begin in next few months. It doesn't look like I will receive the I-20 soon form prior to my scheduled departure from Bangladesh. What should I do?

As soon as you receive an acceptance letter from the school, you can schedule your visa interview appointment. If you do not receive your I-20 form before your scheduled visa interview date, you should bring all relevant documents to your interview. If you are found otherwise qualified, your application will be held in abeyance pending receipt of the I-20. No student visa will be issued until you provide the original, signed I-20 to the Consular Section.

Important note: Some students require extended administrative processing before a student visa may be issued. We urge student visa applicants to complete their applications and schedule a student visa interview as soon as you receive the letter of acceptance from the college/university you plan to attend.

I have been studying in the U.S. and will shortly be going to the U.S. to start or resume my one-year of post-school Optional Practical Training. I have received an Employment Authorization Card from the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. Do I still need a student visa to do my Optional Practical Training?

Yes. If your original student visa has expired you will need a new student visa to enter the U.S. to begin or resume your Optional Practical Training, even if the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services has already issued you an Employment Authorization Card.